

a sympathy from his master, unless it be at the parish expense. Between him and his employer there is no absolute obligation beyond that which the labour markets and the laws of commerce impose—the work performed and the wage paid terminate their connection,—the merchant builder, whose fortune has been achieved by the combined labour of the artificer, has thus (as he considers) fulfilled his part;—the honey once hived the drones are expelled, and must provide for their own future as best they can.

Amongst the many reasons for this isolation of interests, and the deficiency of more generous, paternal, and comprehensive views for the benefit of the various subordinate ranks composing a class, is the system of union and combination, so constantly the subject of legal discussion and enactment, and that antagonism in which capital, on the one hand, and labour on the other, are continually placed. To what an alarming pitch the warfare of this antagonism rises, the annals of the last forty years familiarize to the recollection of all of us. It is one of the great evils inherent in a wealthy commercial and manufacturing country, and has been the ruin of flourishing states, as it may be of this.

But this evil is greatly aggravated, and indeed in a measure justified, where a line of separation is drawn between the ranks, and no sympathy for permanent good and happiness of the humbler is shown by the higher,—no hand of friendship, advice, and fellowship is offered for the ulterior security of the operative and his family, beyond the commercial interchange of wages and labour, with all the contentions and bitterness which always will accompany this barter,—a sympathy and fellowship which the superior instruction, wealth, and influence of the higher ranks would so easily and profitably bestow upon the lower, provided they will help themselves, by thrift and providence, with those means which have been provided for them.

In a wealthy, commercial, and manufacturing country the Merchant Builder is of natural growth, and has been exhibited during the last half century, in this country, in very remarkable development, unknown to former ages: his capital absorbs the little tradesman, with all his individuality of skill and character, and either grinds him under his colossal weight into the sub-contractor, or melts him down into his establishment as a hired article of trade. He offers advantageous terms to the public, inasmuch as he is satisfied with one profit instead of the several which the various trades would require, and entails but one trouble and responsibility instead of the many which the ancient system was liable to. The public, therefore, patronize and confirm this practice.

But this, as a kind of monopoly, leads to many well-known evils, and excites an antagonism on the part of labour, which is consuming and ruinous alike to the prosperity, as also the morality, of the operative,—an antagonism which he uses in self-defence, and which brings with it pretensions of wage and rights often indefensible, and which he justifies when he perceives no friendliness or sympathy in his superior towards his personal permanent interests.

Thus, to the tyranny of capital we have added the tyranny of labour, equally violent and unreasonable, and which nothing but a conviction of established mutual regard, apart from the question of barter, would mitigate.

We know that some beneficial measure of

this kind has long been in the contemplation of the Builders' Society; but neither they, nor the other two ranks concerned, could alone effect a really beneficial society of the kind proposed; for any measure exclusively from them would be suspected by the operative, as a device to draw the teeth of their unions, and to rivet the chains already complained of.

The operatives also, alone, are helpless, having neither the leisure nor influence to place their claims before the public in their due proportion; but these two, united to their natural leaders, the architects and engineers, who could have no other interests than those of honour and fairness, would possess all the elements of a great and beneficial institution, and a balm of consummate efficacy in the present malady of our operative system.

An office should be established for the gratuitous agency of contracts for deferred annuities, for all comers, unionists or not, and thus institute the provident part of the institution. For the support of this office, and for general benevolence in case of sickness, inability to pay premiums, and other similar purposes, a Benevolent Fund would be raised; and when we consider the means and the motives which the capitalist builder would have for the support of this fund, and also the public, through the influence of the heads of the profession (who have access to the highest authorities of the country without suspicion of interested motives, other than such as honour and benevolence dictate), and who could thus put forward the claims of the meritorious class which they would benefit, the success of such a society by annual public meetings, and a weekly board, could never be doubted by those who see how many societies of the same general object do flourish in this great country.

The operative thus befriended, and associated with his natural protectors in the face of the public, would be raised and dignified as a class; his morality must be improved by well-directed providence and friendly countenance; and his attachment to Government and public order would be secured by his reliance on their stability; unions would lose their virulence and their justification; a false communism would be displaced for a real one; and a grand step towards a more wholesome order of society in this meritorious class, of most beneficial influence upon others, would be effected, to the great honour and satisfaction of every true Mason and well-wisher to the ingenious and useful class to which he belongs.

We invite suggestions and co-operation: Government Annuities are suggested; but it has been shown that on the principle of *Mutual Assurance* greater advantages can be obtained than are given in Government Annuities; and if, as we understand, a Bill is about to be brought into Parliament to carry out this principle with Government security, a different view may be taken.

BIRMINGHAM WORKHOUSE COMPETITION.—Sir: You have appended to my letter of last week comments reflecting upon the decision of the selecting architects, caused by a charge made by Mr. Brookes—"that he had discovered the name of an architect partially erased on one of the plans."—I trust you will permit me simply to re-assert that no such name was visible to us at the time of our inspection, and allow me to add, in fairness to the competitors, that the whole of their plans were minutely examined, and those reported upon were then in strict accordance with the instructions issued by the Board of Guardians.

—HENRY J. STEVENS.

. What does Mr. Brookes say to this?

REMOVAL OF ILLICIT FEVER-STILLS.

St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate-street.—The vestry of this parish, after a long discussion, unanimously passed the following resolution:—"That in the opinion of this vestry the public health is alarmingly endangered by the continued practice of interring the dead in the parochial burial-ground, and in the vaults under the church, and that all interments in the churchyard of the parish, and in the vaults under the church, be henceforth discontinued. That a committee be appointed to carry out the foregoing resolution, with full power to take any measure necessary for its enforcement." The vicar anxiously concurred, and the Lord Mayor took part in the discussion.

St. Clement's, Eastcheap, City.—The inhabitants have directed the churchwardens to discontinue for the future the burials in the church and churchyard of this parish; the rector cheerfully acquiescing.

Tottenham-court-road Chapel.—The Board of Health have ordered the burial-ground of this chapel to be closed.

St. Clement Danes', Strand.—The Board of Health have peremptorily closed the horrible fever-still in Portugal-street, belonging to this parish.

St. John's, Westminster.—Forty householders and residents have called on the Board of Health to look to the burial-ground of St. John the Evangelist. The two first cases of cholera in that district occurred in houses abutting on the worst part of the ground.

Lambeth.—At a meeting of the inhabitants of Lambeth on the 10th, it was resolved that "the churchyard in High-street, wherein from 200 to 300 persons are buried weekly, to the imminent risk of the lives of all the parishioners, be immediately closed against all future interments."

So long ago as 1552, Bishop Latimer said,— "I doe marvel that London, being soe great a cite, hath not a burial-place without; for no doubt it is an unwholesome thinge to bury within the cite, especiallye at such a time, when there be great sicknesses, and manie die together. I think verilie that many a man taketh his death in Paul's Churchyard, and this I speake of experience; for I myself, when I have been there on some mornings to heare the sermons, have felt such an ill-savoured and unwholesome savour that I was the worse for it a great while after; and I think noe lesse but it is the occasion of great sicknesse and disease."

Sir Christopher Wren, when named one of the commissioners for building new churches, wrote a letter for the consideration of his colleagues, from which a correspondent, Mr. Barlow, has forwarded us an extract. He says:—"I could wish that all burials in churches might be disallowed, which is not only unwholesome, but the pavements can never be kept even, nor pews upright; and if the churchyard be close about the church, this also is inconvenient, because the ground being continually raised by the graves, occasions in time a descent by steps into the church, which renders it damp and the walls green, as appears evidently in all the old churches. It will be inquired where then shall be the burials? I answer in cemeteries, seated in the outskirts of the town; and since it is become the fashion of the age to solemnize funerals by a train of coaches, though the cemeteries should be half a mile or more distant from the church, the charge need be little or no more than usual; the service may be first performed in the church. But for the poor, and such as must be interred at the parish charge, a public hearse of two wheels, and one horse, may be kept at small expense, the usual bearers to lead the horse, and take out the corpse at the grave. A piece of ground of two acres in the fields will be purchased for much less than two roods among the buildings. This being enclosed with a strong brick wall, and having a walk round, and two cross walks, decently planted with *new trees*, the four quarters may serve four parishes, where the dead need not be disturbed at the pleasure of the sexton, or piled four or five upon one another, or the bones thrown out to gain room. In these places beautiful monuments may be erected; but yet the dimensions should be regulated by an architect, and not left to the fancy of every mason; for thus the rich, with large marble tombs, would shoulder